SUNKEN SOUND
Hums from the Heart
Vol. 2

INTRODUCTION

Music has always been the breeding ground for an ever evolving queer spaces . The most famous musicians and pioneers have been an essential force in embedding the importance of queer culture into current youth's perspectives.

This issue of Sunken Sound, titled **'Hums from the Heart'** aims to celebrate this aspect of the artform through personal messages. Every song means something else to everyone and when it comes to introducing, reinforcing and affirming queer ideas and expression it becomes more than just music, but a symbol of hope.

This volume is a collection of lives lived through sound. From discovery to affirmation, we hope these stories inspire and for outsiders, we hope they make you understand.

Back in Year 7 (around when I was 11–12 years old), me and my best friend would listen to this song together in math class. We would share headphones and hide our phones face down because at first we thought of it as an incredibly scandalous thing. We already knew we were both bi, but this song and the tension that came from listening to it led to us discovering our identities further. We came out to each other in that math class, and that was my first time ever talking to anyone about my sexuality. It led to us dating for a bit... even though it wasn't long.

Immunity - Clairo

At first I just mainly enjoyed the music itself, but then as I slowly adjusted to the lyrics, the next thing I knew, I could already sing the entire song in my head whenever I was bored. During the time it came out, I was bisexual and was attracted to this slightly older girl. I wanted an album to create a silly scenario about me and her. Then I soon realized I would rather experience all of this with a woman instead of a man. Everything in the music then clicked when I met my present gf years later.

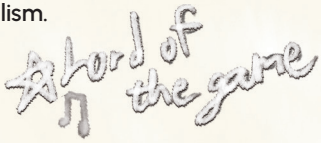
♫-Bags

WRITTEN BY
Mena

My Love is Sick - Madds Buckley

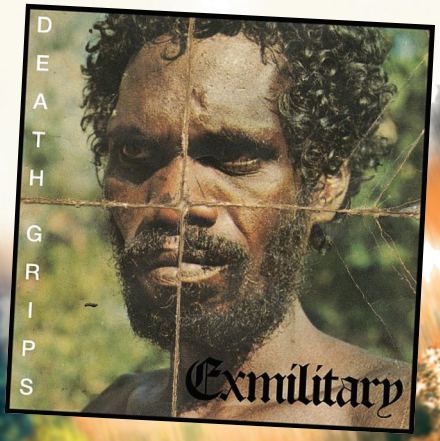
This album was one of the first I discovered with a queer undertone, and it remains one of my favorites. The songs and animations that come with it tie together to tell a story of love and heartbreak. For me, this album conveys well the complexity and nuances of love, including the unique hardships that sometimes come with queer love. Lined with all the things that people often face when they love someone—yearning, joy, adoration, old baggage and trauma, misunderstanding, heartbreak, and yet hope for love yet to come—this album helped me get through my own experiences with queerness and love. Madds Buckley writes beautiful lyrics with underlying metaphors that you catch more and more as you listen to each song on the album. This album is just beautifully heartbreaking, yet hopeful with its story and music, and I think that wonderfully describes just how love feels for me.

During the time I discovered Death Grips, I was already in the process of walking away from religion and trying to create a new path to follow. It was music I never really allowed myself to listen to out of fear of sinning, in a sense. Listening to this album, most notably Beware, felt like something that I wasn't supposed to do; likely because of the lyrics and melody of the songs, which was so different from worship music. Through worship music, you place the belief and hope of one above all to protect you. When the faith is gone, who do you become without a set of beliefs and systems to guide you? Beware, as I interpret it, is accepting your individual self (to put it very simply). Being in a space of moral dread and uncertainty for who I was, I found Death Grips to help myself move away from that fear, with many of their other songs involving throwing away societal norms and embracing individualism.



Although their songs are not exactly about queerness, I believe it is how they create art unapologetically which helped me come to accepting my identity without the need to conform both outside and inside the queer space. I think this is well reflected with how Zach Hill, a member of Death Grips, had to say in an interview:

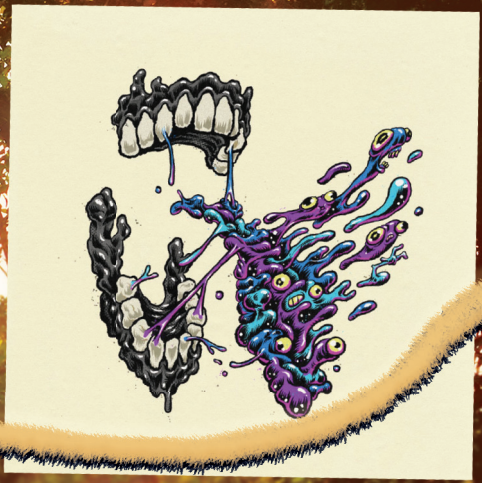
"As a group, we're perceived in large part as male or very aggressive, but we don't think about those things. There is no gender to this group. It's androgynous. But we know that perception. Peoples' hangups with sexuality, gender, and nudity-- it's similar to how I feel about organized religion. It's toxic and poisonous to the human mind, and the development of humans in the modern world. In our own modest way, through our artwork, that's what it represents: pushing past everything that makes people slaves without even knowing it."



Exmilitary- Death Grips

Rach

bitter tongues
- james marriott



Tbh I had already known I was queer before I listened to bitter tongues but specifically listening to car lights was kinda what made me realize like oh im like *queer* queer if that makes sense? Like idk I think I just didnt truly realize how much liking girls as well as guys would truly impact my life and how different it may be depending on like oh what gender my partner will be like idrk how to explain.

Car lights (or grapes)

1000 gecs was a silly mistake. At first I couldn't believe what I was hearing, and I even made fun of it. But the more I found myself immersed in this record, the more I found out about its importance, both to me and to the genre of hyperpop. It's rebellious, it revels in its silliness, it's abrasive, and it's loudly queer. I didn't even notice that Laura Les was transgender because I didn't know what being transgender was. This silly and rebellious music became the soundtrack to my quarantine, where through its divisiveness and experimentation, it opened my eyes to a world I hadn't seen before.

How this wave of pop was created by very openly queer and alternative artists, and how this queer culture then later defined modern pop music. Or how this album helped me access online spaces that made me discover people of so many different identities. It's symbolic of a passageway to me, like the first domino in me accepting my identity as someone who's very queer and confused. In a way, me accepting the experiments of this album and actually coming to like it was sort of me coming to understand the perspectives of queer people, as before I had a naive and unfair perspective about them due to how edgy and immature boys can be in their growing years. 1000 gecs had me tied emotionally and, oddly enough, even though it's such a silly album, it completely broke me apart at times and led me to better, more knowledgeable places.

Money Machine

โลกอยากให้ - LHAM

Believe it or not, it took me years after hearing this song for the first time to realize it's actually about a guy having an affair lol. What makes this song relatable to me is that I've been through something similarly complicated to the lyrics (not the cheating part). A situation where me and my *** (let's say close friend) both knew we liked each other, but neither of us ever said it. Neither of us wanted to. We did have some kind of sexual relationship, but at the same time we both avoided talking about it. It's not like we didn't know how we felt. We did. But because or our society, images, and where we stood in life, neither of us could really say it out loud. Every time we saw each other, every time we looked at each other, we both knew there was something more there. We shared physical memories together, but we had to act like none of it had ever happened. I've always known that I prefer women romantically, but men sexually. For me, having a romantic relationship with a man feels almost impossible. Yet somehow, there can still be a deep connection something you can feel in each other just by looking into someone's eyes.

Frankly I think it's a situation that many of us who are bisexual. pansexual and etc have been through. The internal struggle to love freely that is held down by societal standards. I just want people to know that you don't always need to find an answer for yourself. Somethings cannot be described. Sometimes all you need to do is be honest with your feelings. There's no need to force yourself into being or not being something. I dont even understand myself so... just be you without fear.

Rumours
-Fleetwood Mac

This is not about the whole Silver Springs thing, but rather about how I discovered Fleetwood Mac. Ever since I had seen the Glee - Fleetwood Mac episode, I have always associated the band with queer culture. How Glee works is that most of the time, characters pick a song that correlates with their feelings to sing. Glee did an episode surrounding the music of Fleetwood Mac, specifically from Rumours. The episode revolves around friendships, rumours about queer relationships, and love confessions. Seeing people interpret the band's songs in diverse ways like this had me interested

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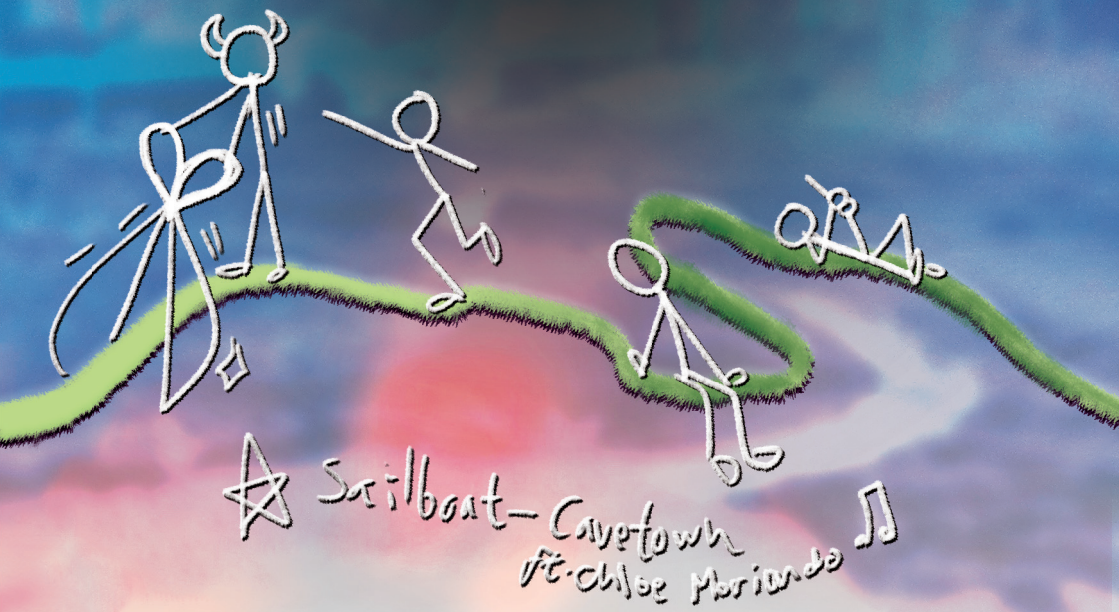
☆ Songbird
(Deluxe Beepcut)
Planets of the
Universe Demo

ppyaetutu

Running with Scissors - Cavetown

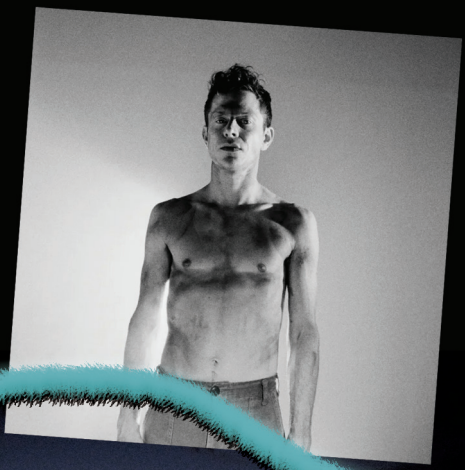
Running with Scissors uncovers that queer self-discovery doesn't always have to be loud or obvious. The album's themes of uncertainty, growth, and learning to accept yourself resonated with me and gave me a deeper appreciation for the different ways queer experiences can be expressed. Through both the music and the context behind it, I learned that it's okay to take time to understand who you are and that self-acceptance is an ongoing process.



I dove deep into Phoebe Bridgers' discography, curating all her unreleased music and covers. Punisher was the first album of hers I had on vinyl and it has stuck with me ever since. Walking the listeners through her struggles and perceptions of her family, herself, and her relationships, I understood how complex and fluid relationships are. Blurring the lines between romantic and platonic relationships, Bridgers articulates her own thoughts on that very well.

Sinker

Set my Heart on Fire Immediately



To me, Set My Heart on Fire Immediately wasn't just an album; it was a flaming arrow straight through the heart. As a queer listener, I've spent a lot of time internalizing the struggle for intimacy and connection, often feeling like my desires were too messy or fleeting to be understood. Mike Hadreas completely stripped away that isolation.

The record moves effortlessly between massive, colorful pop anthems like "On The Floor" and deeply vulnerable, hushed spaces. That sonic contrast felt so true to my own experience—the constant shift between wanting to boldly celebrate my body and wanting to retreat into the quiet safety of my own thoughts. It's an album that captures the raw reality of queer longing and the painful beauty of looking for lasting love in a world that often prefers temporary moments. Listening to this masterpiece helped me own my vulnerability. It taught me that living and loving openly as a queer person is bound to be intense and cinematic, and there is immense strength in letting yourself feel every single bit of it.

☆ On The Floor

lilyth Saturday Night Wrist - Deftones

While not exactly being the most important thing musically during my questioning stage, it's by far the album I've seen myself the most in. The angrier tracks about the band's tensions oddly reflected in my denial of my identity (specifically the lyrics of choosing sides), while a line in the outro Rivière "She waits for a new face" felt too relatable. I listened to the album over and over again during the worst parts of my dysphoria hoping that this would be the one that makes it happen (I was so in denial and/or so dysphoric that I pretty much felt like I had to be at my lowest in terms of my identity in order to actually realize... thankfully that didn't happen)

Cherry waves

kaya softscars – yeule

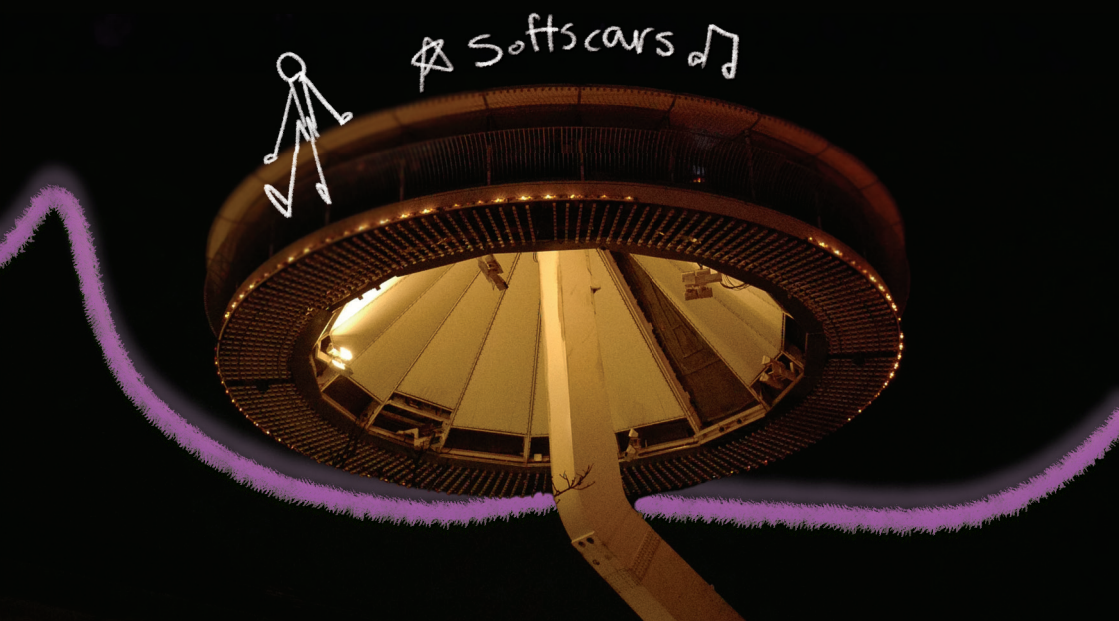
Yeule has often conceptualised themself as a cyborg, or a robot; or as they put it on the outro to their third album 'softscars', 'aphex twin flame': "Ever so slightly less than real". Throughout their discography, they've often used this metaphor as a shield for their own feelings - or perhaps an explanation - which is what makes the humanity of softscars bleed through so palpably.

The dichotomy between yeule's feelings of inhumanity and their desire to simply feel real, a desire that has lay at the heart of their music since 2019's 'Serotonin II' is on full display here, whether that's through these glitchy indietronica soundscapes juxtaposed against guitars that fluctuate between gorgeous dream-pop on tracks like 'sulky baby' and 'ghosts', along with these chaotic grunge aesthetics that hit you squarely in the face on intro 'x w x' and fan-favourite 'dazies'.

This dichotomy is something I personally have felt about my own relationship with queerness, and while gender is never confirmed to be related to the themes of the album in its lyrics, it's hard not to code them as such with the focus on identity at the core of the project - as well as lines like 'There's a boy and girl inside me too, non-binary it's true' (incredible line by the way I don't care what anybody tells me). To me, queer identity and sense of self are inextricably linked, and it's something that bleeds into every facet of my life, even if implicitly so.

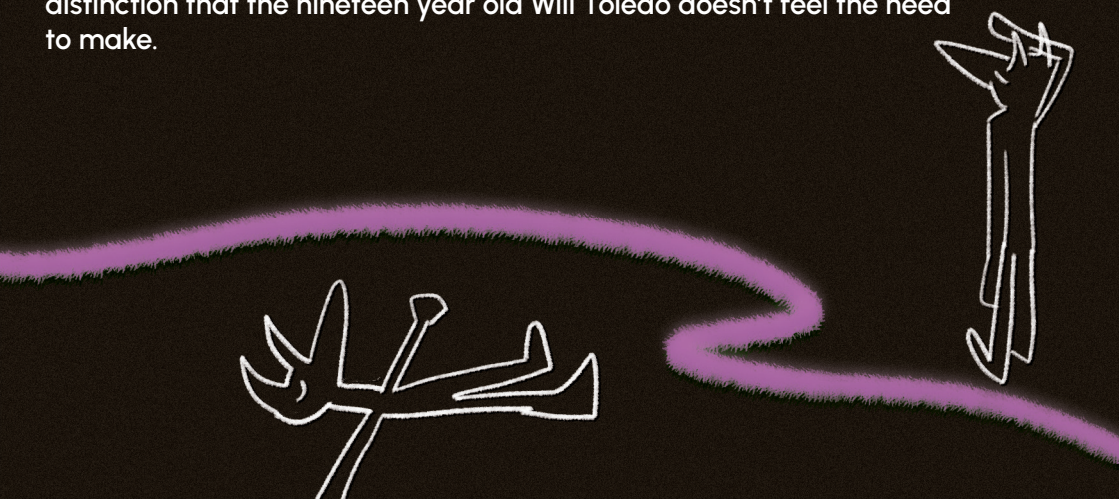
Their voice (while absolutely ethereal) often gets chopped up and torn apart, not just playing into the album's themes around identity and self, but selling them and their believability. 'software update' is a track that I read as being about yeule's struggle to prove their love to someone who's using them, to prove that they can change, with this being sold to us through the idea of a software upgrade. As the track progresses and the instrumental engulfs the mix, their voice becomes more and more buried and processed, almost like they're becoming more and more fake, artificial even. Not only does this disturbingly speak to the transactional nature we can sometimes find ourselves perceiving love to be about, but also to how we can perceive our own being.

yeule has long spoken about and framed themself as 'artificial', a word that I have no doubt has been thrown at numerous queer people trying to live freely and happily as themself. Queerness, in the eyes of many, speaks to something being inherently wrong with somebody. To them being broken. And while this of course isn't based in reality, it's hard not to internalise that for a lot of people. And I think that this artificiality, that on 'softscars' intertwines and tussles with humanity and the inherent chaos and trauma that comes with it, is such a realistic depiction of the experience of feeling out of your own body, an experience that often comes with gender dysphoria. Incredible album.



Queerness can be freeing and beautiful at times; when you have the opportunity to understand your sense of self and find a community it can feel liberating, but queerness can also be acutely isolating and oppressive. This was the version that I spent my teenage years with.

I found Car Seat Headrest's Twin Fantasy at the age of seventeen, having nearly reached adulthood without having ever been in a relationship or come out, with my identity being confined within the borders of my body and mind.What made the album so essential to understanding love and queerness was that the album wasn't about love at all, it is an album about heartbreak, about sex and drugs and unhealthy connections and discomfort with one's body. This album was important to me because I had been so afraid of doing love wrong, so uncomfortable with messing up that it felt easier to stay inside and hide, but this album is about messing up, it represents the fluidity of queerness, and the flaws of being a teenager in love, or maybe just in lust, a distinction that the nineteen year old Will Toledo doesn't feel the need to make.



As I've grown alongside Twin Fantasy, I've found the most beauty in how unmistakably teenaged the album is. Will Toledo has a way to phrase concepts of love and hurt in a way that seems so simple and immature, but holds all the more weight because it feels so human, so teenaged, and so okay with being imperfect. In the moment that Will slows down halfway into "Beach Life-in-Death" and simply states, "It's been a year since we first met; I don't know if we're boyfriends yet," he manages to convey such a beautiful and quintessential portrait of what it means to be a queer teenager trying to put the pieces of your life together. As Will Toledo says to his lover, "Let us touch so much of ourselves together," it's so discernibly horny, awkward, shy and uncomfortable, in a way that feels so distinctly human. So much of the beauty of Twin Fantasy comes from how much Will messes up, but the flaws of inexperience can be excused by the immaturity of teenhood.

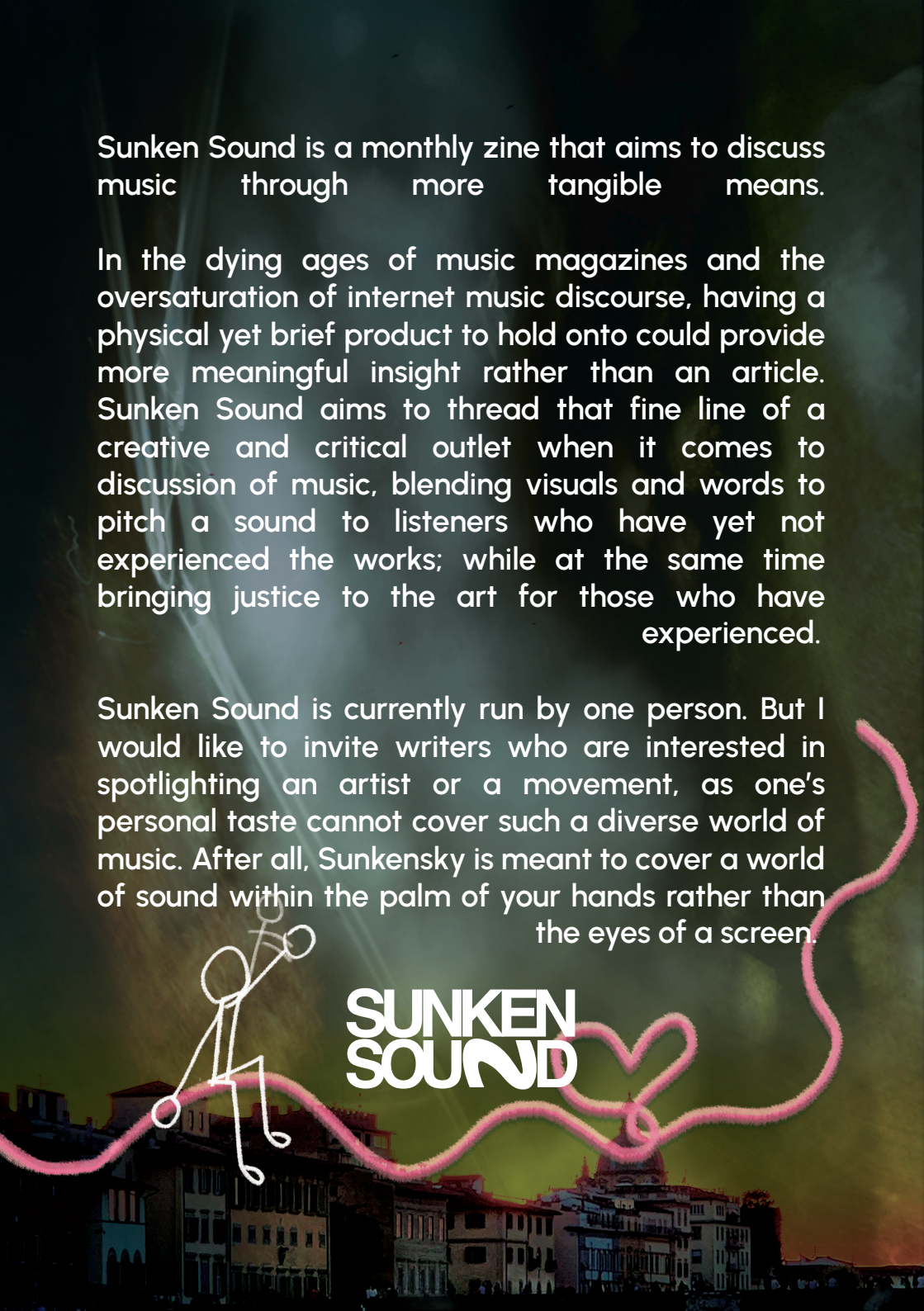
I think this youthful aspect is why I clung to this album so much when I first found it. In a world that doesn't teach queer teenagers how to find their place but expects them to be there nonetheless, Will Toledo gave me an excuse to mess up, and I perhaps unhealthfully clung to my youth because it was the only thing that could forgive my rootlessness and lack of identity. As I turn twenty next month, I am forced to part with my youth to some degree, I can no longer fall upon my adolescence as an excuse to mess up. Part of me wishes I got to experience the desire, love, and heartbreak that Will processes across the duration of this album, but I understand that this wasn't the path laid out for me and I have grown to be okay with that.

While I would be lying if I said my heart didn't shutter every time I hear Will Toledo say, "These teenage hands will never touch yours again," I have come to terms with the fact that I am set out on my own passage of individuality, and that queerness is defined by the fact that we get to write our own stories, some of which will fade, but not without leaving their scars. When I first found Twin Fantasy, I approached it as an album about love, a love that I felt I needed despite its toxicity, desperation and grief, as I had felt so trapped that to be impassioned, whether through love or grief, was so much more appealing than the numbness and apathy that characterized my teenage years. Will Toledo could not teach me what it meant to be queer, to be a teenager, or to be in love, but he was able to inject humanity into these concepts in such a way that a younger version of me could begin to see their own reflection, in a way that made progress and understanding feel possible for the very first time.

We hope these stories have brought joy and perspective to all of our readers. Sunken Sound owes everyone an apopolgy for finishing a 'pride month' issue so late, but we would like it to be a reminder as well that pride month isn't a singular celberation. Pride should always be celebrated anywhere, anytime, and for any reason. Because pride month isn't just a singular event but a culture that has to be understood and reinforced. And we at Sunken Sound will always attempt to endlessly support this cause as much as we possibly can.

A huge thanks to all of the writers that contributed to this volume, your bravery and support means the world to us. We hope to hear from you again in the near future. The qr code below links to a playlist of all the 'highlighted' songs featured on each album. We hope you enjoy listening and have a happy pride!

Sunken Sound is a monthly zine that aims to discuss music through more tangible means.

In the dying ages of music magazines and the oversaturation of internet music discourse, having a physical yet brief product to hold onto could provide more meaningful insight rather than an article. Sunken Sound aims to thread that fine line of a creative and critical outlet when it comes to discussion of music, blending visuals and words to pitch a sound to listeners who have yet not experienced the works; while at the same time bringing justice to the art for those who have experienced.

Sunken Sound is currently run by one person. But I would like to invite writers who are interested in spotlighting an artist or a movement, as one's personal taste cannot cover such a diverse world of music. After all, Sunkensky is meant to cover a world of sound within the palm of your hands rather than the eyes of a screen.